

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

Memorandum



THE SITUATION IN VIETNAM

Information as of 1600
4 January 1966

PREPARED FOR THE NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL
FURTHER DISSEMINATION OF INFORMATION
CONTAINED HEREIN IS NOT AUTHORIZED

TOP SECRET

25X1

Approved For Release 2007/02/08 : CIA-RDP79T00826A000100010009-5

Approved For Release 2007/02/08 : CIA-RDP79T00826A000100010009-5

4 January 1966

HIGHLIGHTS

Hanoi's first official statement on the current US peace initiative came today in the form of a tough, unyielding Foreign Ministry statement. It took note for the first time of the suspension of US bombing, but declared that the US has no right to demand any concessions in return for an end to the air strikes. The statement reiterated in uncompromising terms the DRV's four-point stand and called once again for the US to give "proof" that it accepts these four points.

I. The Military Situation in South Vietnam: Communist guerrillas launched a heavy mortar attack against a US/Vietnamese Special Forces camp at Khe Sanh, in northernmost Quang Tri Province (Para. 1). Operation MARAUDER, in Hau Nghia Province, the first major allied penetration of the Mekong Delta, continues, but there has been no further significant contact with an estimated force of two Viet Cong battalions in the area (Paras. 2-3). Two ARVN battalions and two ROK battalions continue to press their joint offensive in Phu Yen Province against an estimated two Viet Cong battalions in heavily fortified defensive positions (Para. 4). The 1st Brigade/US 1st Air Cavalry Division Monday initiated a large-scale ground sweep in Pleiku Province near the Cambodian border (Para. 5). Viet Cong terrorism continues in the Saigon area (Para. 6).

II. Political Developments in South Vietnam: Nothing of significance to report.

III. Military Developments in North Vietnam:

of SAM sites and equipment in North Vietnam

Status

-i-

25X1

25X1

IV. Other Communist Military Developments:
Nothing of significance to report.

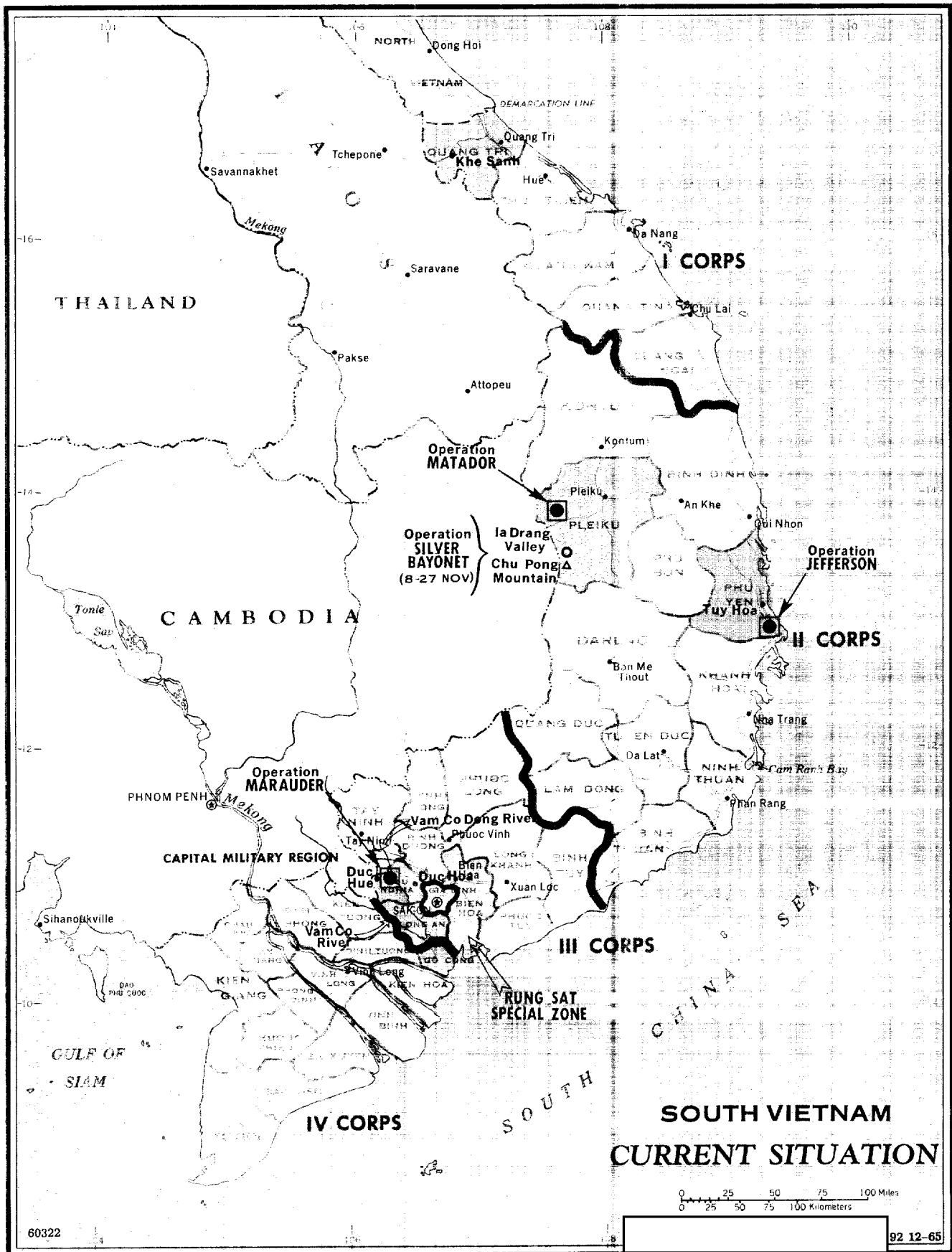
V. Communist Political Developments: Hanoi, in a tough, unyielding Foreign Ministry statement today, issued its first official pronouncement on the current US peace initiative (Paras. 1-3). Chinese Foreign Minister Chen Yi on 30 December hailed the determination of the DRV to persevere in the fight "until complete victory" (Para. 4).

25X1

4 January 1966

-ii-

25X1



25X1

I. THE MILITARY SITUATION IN SOUTH VIETNAM

1. Communist guerrillas, striking in undetermined strength, launched a heavy mortar attack early today against a US/Vietnamese Special Forces camp at Khe Sanh, in South Vietnam's northernmost province, Quang Tri. First reports place government casualties at 10 killed and 20 wounded (1 US). In addition, the attackers completely destroyed the US Special Forces barracks and supply depot.

2. The three South Vietnamese airborne battalions which had been participating in Operation MARAUDER, the joint US/ARVN/Australian ground sweep 25 miles west-southwest of Saigon in Hau Nghia Province, have been withdrawn from the operational area, but remain available for further commitment if required. Meanwhile, two battalions of the US 173rd Airborne Brigade, an Australian infantry battalion, and an ARVN Ranger battalion continue aggressive patrolling actions but without significant contact. The allied operation, initiated on 31 December, has thus far resulted in cumulative Viet Cong losses of 238 killed (US body count), 53 captured, and 591 suspects detained. Friendly casualties to date stand at 46 killed (15 US, 31 ARVN) and 174 wounded (76 US, 98 ARVN).

3. MACV has confirmed that operational elements of the US 173rd Airborne Brigade participating in MARAUDER yesterday lost three killed and seven wounded from two short rounds fired by the New Zealand artillery battery. Subsequent investigation revealed no errors in firing data or in service of the piece, and suggested the possibility of faulty ammunition. Three additional members of the 173rd Airborne Brigade were killed and four wounded yesterday as the result of a misplaced 500-lb bomb delivered in support of maneuvering ground elements.

4 January 1966

I-1

4. In central coastal Phu Yen Province, two ARVN battalions and two ROK battalions, supported by artillery, tactical air, and US naval gunfire, are continuing to press their joint offensive against an estimated force of two Viet Cong battalions in heavily fortified positions south of the provincial capital of Tuy Hoa. The joint Vietnamese-Korean operation, codenamed JEFFERSON, and initiated on 31 December, has thus far resulted in cumulative enemy losses of 160 killed (ROK body count) and nine captured. Friendly casualties have been placed at 27 killed (22 ARVN, 5 ROK), 58 wounded (27 ARVN, 30 ROK, 1 US), and four missing (4 ROK).

5. On 3 January, the 1st Brigade/US 1st Cavalry Division (Air Mobile) initiated Operation MATADOR, a large-scale search-and-destroy ground sweep in Pleiku Province, near the Cambodian border. The tactical zone of operations is about 15 miles north of the locale of Operation SILVER BAYONET, the brigade-strength action last November by the 1st Air Cavalry Division against regimental-strength PAVN/Viet Cong forces in the Ia Drang Valley - Chu Pong Mountain area. In the current US operation, units of the 1st Brigade are making aggressive reconnaissance patrols to probe enemy defense positions, while the main strike force is being held in reserve to react as the situation develops. According to the latest information available from MACV, no contact has yet been established with the Viet Cong.

6. In the Saigon area, Viet Cong terrorism against Vietnamese policemen and civic officials continues. Last night, a terrorist grenade was hurled at a policeman near Cholon, the capital's Chinatown district, killing the peace officer, a Vietnamese soldier, and a passing civilian, and wounding two female bystanders. The previous night, less than three miles from Saigon, enemy terrorists tossed a grenade into the house of a village chief, killing him and a number of his civil guards, and wounding eight members of his family.

4 January 1966

I-2

25X1

25X1

Approved For Release 2007/02/08 : CIA-RDP79T00826A000100010009-5

Approved For Release 2007/02/08 : CIA-RDP79T00826A000100010009-5

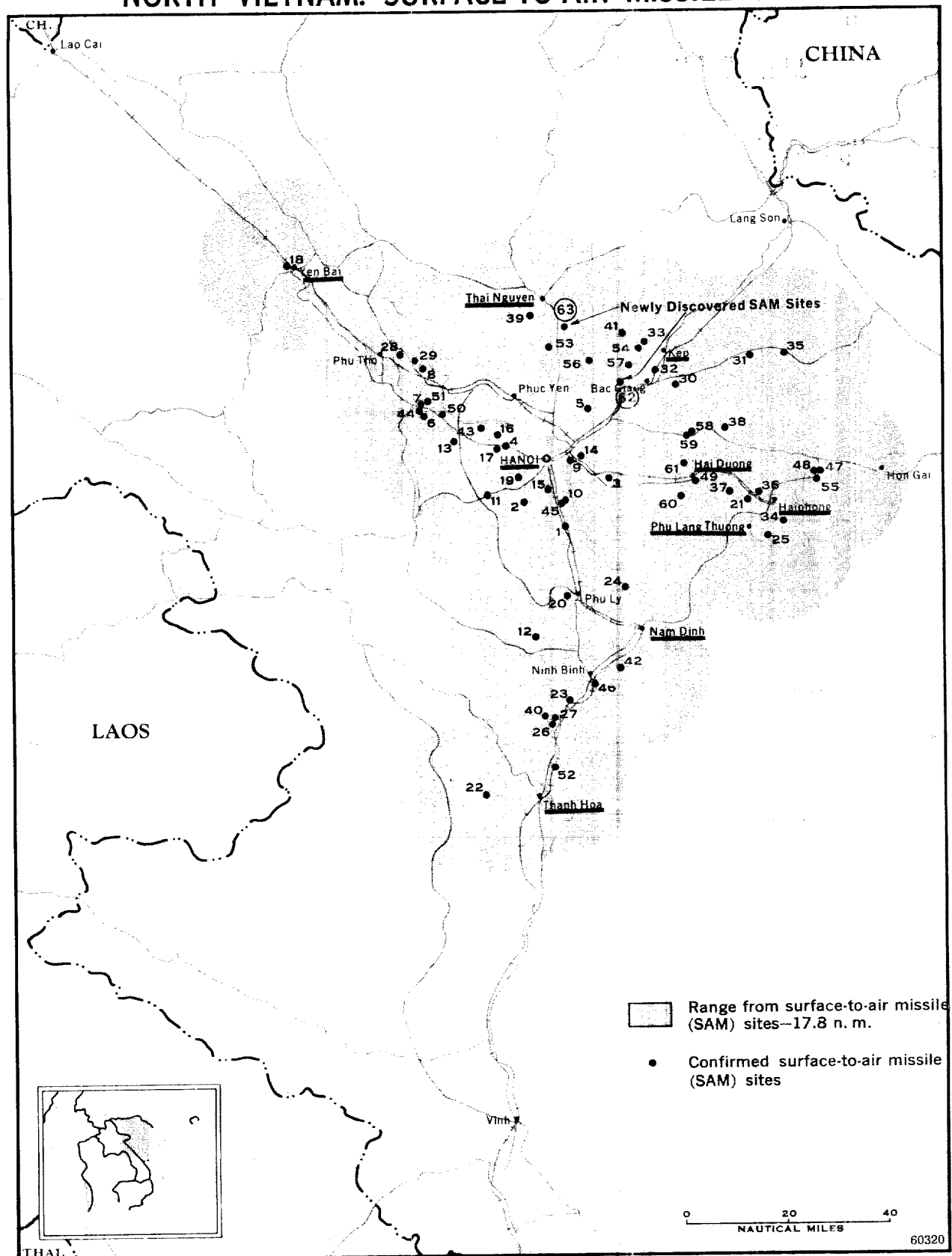
II. POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN SOUTH VIETNAM

1. There is nothing of significance to report.

4 January 1966

II-1

NORTH VIETNAM: SURFACE-TO-AIR MISSILE SITES



25X1

III. MILITARY DEVELOPMENTS IN NORTH VIETNAM

25X1

2. A continuing analysis of [] drone photography disclosed another surface-to-air missile site--number 63--in North Vietnam. The site is located about 28 miles north of Hanoi and has three revetted launch positions and a revetted central guidance area. No missiles or missile-associated equipment were noted.

25X1

3. The large number of SAM sites discovered to date in the DRV does not accurately reflect the status or capability of the SAM system. It is estimated []

25X1

[] that there is only enough missile-associated equipment in the DRV to occupy from 15 to 20 of the 63 SAM sites at any one time. A study is presently under way to determine which SAM sites appear to be operational and to determine how much missile equipment actually is present in the DRV.

25X1

4 January 1966

III-1

25X1

Next 1 Page(s) In Document Exempt

IV. OTHER COMMUNIST MILITARY DEVELOPMENTS

1. There is nothing of significance to report.

4 January 1966

IV-1

V. COMMUNIST POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

1. Hanoi, in a tough, unyielding Foreign Ministry statement today, issued its first official pronouncement on the current US peace initiatives. The statement took note of the US bombing cessation, admitting that it was intended by the US "as a sign of good will." It declared, however, that the US has no right whatsoever to demand any concessions from the DRV in return for an end to the air attacks, and it called instead for the US to end "permanently and unconditionally its bombings and other war acts" against the DRV as part of the price for "consideration" of a political solution to the war.

2. The statement reiterated that the US, in addition to complete termination of attacks on the DRV, must also accept the DRV's four-point proposal and "prove it with practical deeds" before there can be any political solution to the conflict. The four points themselves were reprinted in detail, just as Pham Van Dong originally set them forth. In Pham's original proposal, however, he called only for US "recognition" of the four points as the "basis" for a settlement. The formulation in the Foreign Ministry statement, calling as it does for "proof" of the US acceptance of the four points, continues to suggest a hardening of the DRV position. The DRV has been using this formulation occasionally since last August when it was first broached by Ho Chi Minh.

3. The over-all impression created by the DRV Foreign Ministry statement is that Hanoi is simply uninterested in talks at the present time, except on terms completely unacceptable to the US. It appears to be implying more strongly than in recent months that the four points are considered preconditions to any negotiations. The

4 January 1966

V-1

phraseology, however, still does not make this explicit. The statement, together with other DRV pronouncements since the cessation of the bombing, also suggests that the DRV is concerned over a possible loss of support for its position in international circles as a result of the new US peace initiatives. Hanoi issued a propaganda piece of several thousand words today cataloguing "US crimes" in Vietnam to demonstrate that the US peace campaign is "hypocritical."

4. In a far-ranging press conference granted to a correspondent of the Japanese Communist paper Akahata on 30 December, Chinese Foreign Minister Chen Yi hailed the determination of the DRV to persevere in the fight "until complete victory," and restated the Chinese position that if the US extended the war to China, Peking would "take up the challenge." After repeating the Chinese charge that Soviet assistance to the DRV was "far from commensurate with the strength of the Soviet Union," Chen Yi introduced a new note in Peking's criticism of the USSR when he declared that if Moscow "really wanted to help the Vietnamese," it could have taken diversionary measures in other parts of the world to "immobilize US forces."

25X1

4 January 1966

V-2

25X1

TOP SECRET